

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

CURRENT

SUBJECT: ACTION PLAN FOR CITY'S FUTURE WATER SUPPLY  
POLICY NO.: 400-09  
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 6, 1998

BACKGROUND:

The San Diego Region has traditionally recognized the critical need for an adequate water supply and has consistently been farsighted in planning for and providing for future water needs. During the late nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century the emphasis was on development of regional watershed areas to the maximum extent feasible both technologically and economically. The City also started looking toward the Colorado River system at this time and applied for water rights in 1926. The rapid population growth during World War II led to the formation of the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) in 1944. The CWA subsequently became a member of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) in 1946 in order to economically import water from the Colorado River. Today, MWD serves a 5,200 square mile area supplying water to nearly 13 million people by importing water from the Colorado River and northern California (State Water Project). Depending on climatic conditions, the City currently imports more than 90% of the water normally required to satisfy our annual needs. Because of our increasing water needs, runoff water from local rainfall has gradually contributed proportionately less and less towards our annual usage. Our local water supply is unpredictable and undependable because of extreme variations in annual rainfall. To a lesser degree, this is also a problem in many other parts of the State since California weather consists of alternating wet and dry cycles with below normal rainfall often occurring several years in a row. Droughts, both locally and statewide, are a constant threat. Since Arizona has begun to take its allocation of Colorado River water (thus reducing the amount available for Southern California) and since the State Water Project remains incomplete, it is imperative that San Diego develop other water sources and implement water conservation techniques in order to preclude and/or minimize water shortages in the future.

PURPOSE:

To establish policies to assure an adequate water supply for the City of San Diego.

POLICY:

For ease of organization, the following policies are categorized as either general, or related to water importation, conservation, surface runoff and groundwater development, or reclamation, re-use and desalination.

A. General

It is the policy of the City Council that:

1. The City Manager shall advise the Mayor and City Council annually on the status of the City's

current and future water supplies.

2. The City Manager and Intergovernmental Relations Director shall monitor legislative actions, court decisions, and other events that could affect the City's water deliveries from the Colorado River or northern California and report, as necessary, to the City Council on critical issues.
3. The San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) is recognized as the lead agency for procuring imported water to meet the present and long term needs of the City and the San Diego region. As a member of CWA, the City of San Diego shall assist CWA as needed in working with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), the State Department of Water Resources (DWR), the County of San Diego, other local water agencies, and the private sector in efforts to satisfy the future water requirements of the region.
4. The City Manager and the Water Utilities Director shall work closely with the City Council appointed representatives to the CWA Board of Directors in pursuit of an adequate water supply in the future.
5. The Public Facilities and Recreation Committee of the City Council shall schedule an annual meeting every February with the City appointees to the CWA Board of Directors for the purpose of discussing water issues. At this annual meeting, discussion will focus on a Work Program prepared by the CWA representatives with the assistance of the Water Utilities Director. The Work Program will outline proposals which the CWA representatives would recommend the City support to gain increased water supply.

B. Importation

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Support the concept that there is enough water available in California to meet foreseeable needs if the water is properly managed.
2. Support communication and cooperation among water policy groups in all regions of the state, with an emphasis on finding areas of statewide consensus.
3. Support cost effective and environmentally sound activities that will bring required additional water to Southern California without adversely affecting the interests of the areas of origin.
4. Support efforts by CWA and others to seek additional water supply sources.
5. Support development of water supply to meet present and future needs. Emphasis shall be placed on developing an increased water supply through means such as:

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

CURRENT

- a. Water conservation and efficiency measures (e.g. lining canals where water would otherwise be lost through seepage).
  - b. Removal of institutional barriers that impede more efficient use of water.
  - c. Cost-effective off-stream storage of surplus water south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.
  - d. Underground storage, both in Southern California and in the San Joaquin Valley, subject to the development of the necessary management controls.
  - e. Support for the Lake Mead banking program proposed by the MWD, the Colorado River Board and DWR, which would involve using more state water in above-normal years and storing Colorado River water in Lake Mead for future use.
6. Support pricing and repayment policies for all future water contracts and all future projects that shall ensure that beneficiaries pay their full share of costs associated with development and operation of those facilities.
  7. Support MWD, through CWA, in its effort to pay for facilities to improve the efficiency of the Imperial Irrigation District Water System, in exchange for water which is saved.
  8. Support efforts to coordinate the State Water Project and Central Valley Project to maximize effective water usage.
  9. Support voluntary transfers of water between local and regional suppliers as authorized by State Water Code, Chapter 867, Statutes of 1982. Support efforts to authorize exchange of water by private individuals.

C. Conservation

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Revise and expand the City's Water Conservation Plan (Resolution 256583) to meet the requirements of the State Water Resources control board. After adoption and approval of the revised plan, review periodically for revision as necessary.
2. Support and implement the City's revised Water Conservation Plan and work with the CWA to publicize and promote voluntary water conservation, using techniques such as drought resistant plants and efficient irrigation systems for landscaping, public education on the need for water conservation, and low flow water fixtures and appliances, as well as to evaluate water rate pricing measures and their effects on conservation.
3. In the event of a local water shortage, implement intensified conservation measures such as distribution of water conservation devices; water awareness programs for presentation to schools, service organizations, etc.; media coverage to inform the public of water conservation needs and

techniques; ordinances mandating conservation and establishing fines for water waste if voluntary conservation efforts fail; and water rate pricing disincentives that penalize excessive use of water.

4. Support statewide requirements for agricultural water conservation and efficiency measures.
5. Support efforts to emphasize regional conservation and reclamation programs through a county-wide coordination plan under the auspices of CWA or SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments).
6. Support and implement the City of San Diego's Urban Water Management Plan which is to be adopted prior to December 31, 1985 as required by the State Water Code, Division 6, Sections 10610 through 10656.

D. Surface Runoff and Groundwater Development

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Maintain an emergency reserve storage of water as specified in City Council Policy 400-04 for the purpose of cushioning the impact of temporary interruptions in the delivery of imported water. Such storage to be in an amount sufficient to cover reasonably anticipated needs until repairs can be completed to supply lines in the event of unforeseen emergencies or natural disasters.
2. Support the construction of regional storage reservoirs or enlargement of existing reservoirs as needed.
3. Support programs to recharge and improve the yield from local groundwater basins.

E. Reclamation, Re-use and Desalination

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Support and fund the ongoing operation of an aquaculture and reverse osmosis test facility to develop technology for purifying wastewater to potable standards.
2. Support efforts to better define public health and environmental standards for water re-use and for reclaimed water use.
3. Support energy efficient water and water re-use programs.
4. Support simplification of regulatory approval for the use of treated wastewater for urban landscaping and agricultural irrigation.

5. Support secondary use of "gray water" for urban landscaping and agricultural irrigation.
6. Support development of a local seawater/brackish groundwater desalination facility when shown to be technically and economically feasible.
7. Monitor new technological developments in the field of water desalination.
8. Support and encourage the use of reclaimed water by exempting manufacturing, processing, and research and development firms from mandatory potable water use restrictions ("cutbacks"), if all of the following conditions are met: 1) the business is one of the types of businesses described in categories 2000 through 3999, 7390, and 8730 of the Standard Industrial Classification Code; 2) the business is located in an area where reclaimed water is available; 3) the business uses reclaimed water on its premises to the full extent possible; and 4) the business participates in all applicable City water conservation programs which are considered Best Management Practices by the California Urban Water Conservation Council.

F. Water Quality

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Provide potable water which fully meets all health standards as established by federal, state and county regulatory agencies.
2. Support efforts to maintain groundwater supplies, throughout the State, free of contaminants.

G. Water Supply vs. Demand

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Support the concept that there should be a balance between water demand and water supply and that both should be considered in planning for the future.

HISTORY:

Adopted by Resolution R-259816 12/12/1983  
Amended by Resolution R-264706 12/16/1985  
Amended by Resolution R-290822 10/06/1998